

AM-MIG 9-19

TOKYO (UPI) -- JAPANESE AND U.S. AIR FORCE TECHNICIANS SUNDAY BEGAN DEFUSING AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE THAT HAD BEEN ATTACHED TO A SOVIET MIG-25 FIGHTER TO PREVENT EXAMINATION OF THE CRAFT'S TOP-SECRET ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT.

AFTER DISARMING THE PLANE, THE TEAM OF 11 PERIODS AND 60 JAPANESE DEFENSE OFFICIALS PLAN TO DISMANTLE THE MIG, FLOWN TO JAPAN BY A DEFECTING SOVIET PILOT.

IN WASHINGTON, CIA DIRECTOR GEORGE BUSH SAID SUNDAY THE SUPERSONIC CRAFT "COULD BE A MAJOR INTELLIGENCE BONANZA FOR THE FREE WORLD."

THE PERIODS, CLAD IN BLUE JEANS AND T-SHIRTS, WERE FLOWN TO HAKODATE AIRPORT ON JAPAN'S NORTHEAST ISLAND OF HOKKAIDO IN A SPECIAL JAPANESE MILITARY PLANE FROM THE YOKOTA AIR BASE JUST OUTSIDE TOKYO.

THE EXPLOSIVE DEVICE WAS ATTACHED TO THE PLANE'S GEAR TO PREVENT INSPECTION OF THE MIG'S COMPLEX ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT.

THE PLANE, WHICH CAN REACH SPEEDS OF NEARLY THREE TIMES THE SPEED OF SOUND, WAS FLOWN TO JAPAN BY SOVIET AIR FORCE LT. VIKTOR IVANOVICH BELENKO, WHO REQUESTED REFUGE IN THE UNITED STATES.

BELENKO WAS FLOWN TO THE UNITED STATES LAST WEEK AND IS UNDERGOING QUESTIONING BY DEFENSE OFFICIALS AND THE CIA.

JAPANESE OFFICIALS SAID THEY HOPED TO DISMANTLE THE MIG-25 IN ABOUT A WEEK.

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